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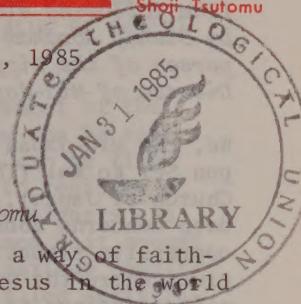
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"JESUS CHRIST -- OUR FOUNDATION FOR PEACE AND UNITY"

The 29th Triennial Assembly of the NCC-J

by Shoji Tsutomo



We have tried to find a way of faithful discipleship to Jesus in the world today.

These emphases will be remembered in prayers as we proceed into the next term. We will proceed with the belief that peace--*shalom*--will be realized only when it is sought with the view of the oppressed and suffering.

For the next three year term, peace will be our primary focus. For peace --*shalom*--is threatened by the existence of nuclear weapons in the world and around Japan. It is also threatened more slowly but undeniably by the exploitation of earth, sea and air space. Peace in Japan is endangered by the militarization evident in politics and society, and by the exploitation of nature and people.

The threats to peace are felt keenly when we work among minority peoples. Thus, we continue to work with them as we work for peace.

This is the time that all the church should stand against militarization and devastation as the church's confession to the Prince of Peace. Ecumenism must be a basis of the church's search for peace.

Happy New Year!

The JCAN Staff wishes to extend to all its readers their best wishes for peace and joy in 1985.

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NIPPON SEI KO KAI STATEMENT OF CONCERN ON THE PHILIPPINE SITUATION

(The following statement was issued by Bishop Abraham Uematsu, Chairperson of the Nippon Sei Ko Kai Diocese of Mid-Japan)

We, the Mid-Japan Diocese of the Nippon Sei Ko Kai (The Anglican Episcopal Church of Japan), want to express our deep concerns about the ever growing oppressive situation in the Philippines where the people of the Philippines continue to suffer and the Philippine Episcopal Church is under persecution because of her willingness to stand on the side of the suffering people.

At the same time, we are making urgent appeals to members of Nippon Sei Ko Kai to share these concerns and join in prayer for the people of the Philippines, and further to put into concrete action their concern and prayers as an effort to bring an end to the oppression in the Philippines.

We continue to pray that our Filipino brothers and sisters may be further strengthened with courage and hope as they continue to struggle to realize His Kingdom in their country.

We hereby wish to express our continuing support to the Filipino people and our firm solidarity with them.

The statement received an immediate response of appreciation and thanks from the Nippon Sei Ko Kai's partner church in the Philippines.

The following is an excerpt from a letter written by Bishop Richard Abelton of the Missionary Diocese of the Northern Philippines of the Philippine Episcopal Church.

RESPONSE FROM THE PHILIPPINE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

On behalf of the people of the Diocese of Northern Philippines and the Philippine Episcopal Church, we thank you for your statement of concern. It gives us assurance that Christians from other nations know our suffering and are praying for us. Your message of hope and solidarity strengthens us more to persevere in our struggle for a just and humane society.

This is our first time to receive this kind of message from our brothers and sisters in Japan, and we are sharing this with our clergy and lay people. We have also sent copies to authorities concerned to let them know our solidarity as Christians, and to remind them of their sworn duty to respect and uphold the rights of the people.

We are nearing the end of another difficult year, and it is very difficult to believe the assurance of the government that our situation is improving. The Governor of the Philippines' Central Bank said that in terms of the economy, it would take at least five years for the national economy to attain the economic level we had in 1981. Social tension continues to grow as politicians prepare for the elections set for 1986 and 1987.

Our future indeed looks very grim, but as Christians we have not lost hope. In these times of despair, Christians are called to share hope with the many and to work for its realization. This itself requires courage under our circumstances and this is where we need the support and encouragement of fellow Christians. For your timely solidarity message, we thank you again, and we hope for your continued support.



GAIKOKUJIN TOROKU HO

JAPAN'S ALIEN REGISTRATION LAW

Article 1

"The purpose of this law is to control foreigners staying in Japan by conducting registration, clarifying their place of residence and their status."

Article 13

"Foreigners [16 years and over] must always carry a Registration Card issued by their local government office."

"Foreigners must show the Alien Registration Card to any police officer, Immigration personnel, Maritime police, public security officer or local or national government personnel when they request the card for administrative purposes."

* * * * *

The Alien Registration law and its requirements are presently being scrutinized by people from all sectors of society here in Japan and abroad.

As an issue it has gone through a transformation in the past 2 years, and may well reach a climax in 1985. At one and the same time it reveals Japan's sense of uniqueness and gauges the extent of the internationalization of Japanese society. The U.S. Country by Country Report on Human Rights in Japan states:

"Though the Japanese are receptive to foreign ideas, the citizens of this densely populated nation have a cultural, ethnic and racial homogeneity which makes them less willing or able to integrate alien residents in Japan into their society."

As a national issue, it touches a nerve of many of the 700,000 Koreans resident in Japan. Approximately 570,000 of these are first, second, third and fourth generation permanent residents. Discrimination against Korean residents in Japan continues regardless of the words in the Japanese constitution which state:

"All of the people are equal under the law. There shall be no discrimination in political, economic or social relations because of race, creed, sex, social status or social origin."

Penalties for infringement of the Alien Registration Law can be severe. For example, Japanese can be fined ¥2000 for forgetting to register a change of address. Foreigners can be fined up to 100 times that amount, up to ¥200,000. The maximum penalty for not carrying the Alien Registration card at all times is also ¥200,000 and/or detention. Each year since 1975 over 3000 aliens have been prosecuted for not carrying their card.

As of December 1984, 73 people had formally refused to be fingerprinted. The majority of these are Koreans whose families have been resident in Japan for one generation or more. The most recent "kyohisha", or refuser, however, is Andrew Bartlett, a missionary volunteer from the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. to the Korean Christian Centre in Osaka. [His statement made upon refusal to be fingerprinted follows this story.] Opposition to the Alien Registration Law is currently being contested in eight courts nationwide. The outcome of these cases will be of vital importance for the future of the Law in Japan--and for the human rights of foreigners in Japan.

(Excerpts taken from "The Alien Registration Law of Japan and Moves for Its Reform," by Kathleen Mori-kawa and Patrice Haffeman--both of whom have refused to be fingerprinted. Copies of the study are available in Japan for ¥500, which includes postage and handling, from:

2-17-4 Minami Rinkan
Yamato City, Kanagawa Prefecture
Japan 242)



PERSONAL DEMAND CONCERNING THE

ALIEN REGISTRATION LAW

This day, December 17, 1984, fully aware of the possible consequences, I refuse the obligatory fingerprinting procedure. I have resolved to deny this fingerprinting procedure of the Alien Registration Law because to give my fingerprint would be to contradict my religious values and convictions. I have been brought up to value the dignity of all human beings. The Alien Registration Law discriminates against the foreigners who live in Japan, and is a violation of their human rights. As such, I have decided to follow the law of God, that every person is to be equally valued and respected, and will not comply with fingerprinting procedure. This act of civil disobedience is directed at the Japanese government leaders who refuse to listen to strong domestic and international objections to this unnecessary and unfair Alien Registration Law.

The Alien Registration Law is an institutionalized manifestation of the historically deep-rooted distrust and hatred of the Korean people. The Alien Registration Law must be abolished so that this prejudice is not legally justified.

It is with these goals in mind that I join in solidarity with the mounting opposition movement against the Alien Registration Law. From my position as a non-Korean foreigner, I hope to bring to light that this is more than a Japanese-Korean problem. This issue is also of international concern for the obvious reason that it is an issue concerning the dignity of human beings. The people of the world are watching closely to see what kind of solutions Japan will come up with to deal with this discrimination problem. Because of my concern with this problem, I plan to make reports of the kinds of discrimination Koreans in Japan suffer from, including the history and assimilation

policy, and will communicate it to the international community.

This fingerprinting refusal is not directed at the Ikuno Ward workers, who deeply understand the problem. It is with the wish that the Ikuno officials will be sensitive to the problem that I make this demand. If the officials deal with the issue sensitively, it will be an important spiritual aid to those fighting for justice.

This act is taken, not only as an objection to the law, it is taken with the hope that the ideology underlying the law will be exposed. This demand is voiced with the expectation that the human rights of all foreigners will be guaranteed

(signed) Andrew C. Bartlett

(The above statement ---translated into English by the signator---was read at the Ikuno Ward Office on December 17, 1984. Andrew Bartlett, aged 24, is a missionary volunteer from the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. to the Korean Christian Centre in Osaka.)

JAPAN - KOREA HUMAN RIGHTS

CONSULTATION ON FINGERPRINTING ISSUE

Sponsored jointly by the National Christian Council of Japan and the National Council of Churches of Korea, this meeting will take place in Tokyo from January 30 to February 1, 1985.

Approximately 20 participants, 7 of whom will come from Korea, will gather to consider the present status of the fingerprinting issue in Japan and possible courses of action.

"Civilization is not based on electric light nor on the production of Nuclear bombs. Civilized people do not kill each other."

--Rev. Nichidatsu Fujii, founder of Buddhist sect Nippon-zan Myohoji

THE POST-WAR PERIOD IN JAPAN:

40 YEARS OF CHANGE

(The following is a summary/translation of an article which appeared in the Asahi Shimbun Jan. 3/85. It discusses 40 years of unexpected changes in post-war Japan, caused by economic development and the evolution of a multiple value system. The dialogue is between OOKA Shohei, a writer, and MITA Munesuke, a sociologist from Tokyo University.)

MITA: Over half of the population of Japan was born after World War II. I myself was born in 1937. Mr. Ooka, you were 36 years old when the war ended and thus have seen the the 40 year post-war period in Japan as a writer.

OOKA: I was a prisoner of the U.S. in the Philippines when the war ended. I felt that the ideal reformation of Japan would be difficult to realize under U.S. occupation. What I saw on my return made me believe that the changes were transitory ones. I felt this new democratic society would swing back to the former type of society sooner or later. The military domination had ended, but one political party, the LDP, continued to monopolize Japan. The fact that the military is now under an independent budget is creating a very dangerous situation.

MITA: When do you think the social trend of militarization started in Japan?

OOKA: It seems that changes occurred every 7 years. For example, when I was 36, I never expected what would happen as a result of the 1960's rapid economic growth.

MITA: The modernization that occurred in Japan as a result of economic development completely changed Japanese society. Even I could tell the differences of the social condition, the changed roots of social structure. A changed cultural consciousness was apparent in every level of society.

20 years before the mid-1960's and 20 years after are 2 completely different social situations.

OOKA: That is true. From Japan's defeat in 1945 to 1952, Japan was under the U.S. occupation. The tension among people was immense.

MITA: That was the time that the major preoccupation among people was the daily struggle to live.

OOKA: At that time, some people believed that the U.S. occupation would assist in the democratization of Japan. Yet I see that many things that were stressed under the Tenno system are now regaining strength. Some people are saying the the post-war changes were only a manipulation of the U.S. Article 9 of the constitution, the denunciation of war, became an illusion. Yet Japan's present prosperity stems from the existence of that article.

MITA: I believe that the effects of the truce are evident in the literature which deals with issues of living through the war, and of the effort for reconstruction. Do you not think that this literature will remain in our history longer than the ideologies of the post-war period?

OOKA: Before the war, writers wrote from a strictly individual perspective. A characteristic of the post-war period is a realization of the power of the masses. This in turn was translated into literature.

MITA: The children of those who initiated changes in the first post-war period became leader critics of the period of rapid economic growth. Their children are now about 20 years old, and are called the "Yasashisa" (kind or generous) generation. I am interested to see what will happen in the 1990s when the children of the leaders of the 1960s will effect society.

OOKA: Yet it would seem that no one wants anything different than a middle class life style and middle class consciousness.

("Post-War Changes" continued)

MITA: The young generation however, doesn't really indentify with the middle class. They are most concerned with keeping up with the current trends.

OOKA: The young seem to be trying to rationalize their lifestyle. Yet they fear the future and face it without hope. Why do elementary school children kill themselves? Problems like this are of real concern to mental health specialists

MITA: One of the effects of TV is the creation of a different consciousness. Life, death, murder are all understood as visualized drama. People avoid dealing with real life problems. People do not see Japan's prosperity as built on the poverty of the Third World. Disabled people are insititutionalized so that the majority can avoid and ignore them. A middle class consciousness seems to entail hiding all those who are weak, or who do not fit the prescribed mold. That which cannot be hidden is faced only when it becomes unavoidable in schools or the wider society.

OOKA: Parts of society simply cannot handle the speed of social change.

MITA: Once the young were concerned by ideology, for example the challenge existentialism posed to Marxism. Now it seems that young people no longer care about changes in ideology. Culture is separated from the reality of life. People live under illusions, they avoid thinking about reality.

OOKA: Cultural changes have been too rapid for people to handle. Understanding of the the present situation differs. People react in different ways.

MITA: The mass today sees politics, social issues and the dominant value system as illusions. The problem of today's young is that they see

life with a telescopic view. They see life from a cosmic perspective. For them, life is a mirage, a short flash in the universe. They thus have no sense of the reality of the life experience. Yet, if one begins to sense the mystery of life, even with a cosmic perspective, one may grow toward an understanding of the meaning of life.

INAUGURATION OF THE
ASIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

On December 10th, 1984, the 36th anniversary of the Universal Decaration on Human Rights, the first Asian regional human rights mechanism came into being. The inauguration of the Asian Human Rights Commission was announced in Tokyo. A number of distinguished lawyers and academics attended the inaugural function held at the Japan Christian Centre. Senator Jose Diokno, a well known opposition leader in the Philippines, Mr. Yap Thiam Hien, an Indonesian human rights lawyer, Mr. Kang Shin Ok, a lawyer from Korea, Prof. Upendra Baxi, Vice-Chancellor of South Gujarat University in India, Mr. Kenkichi Nakadaira, former President of Amnesty International-Japan Section were some of those who have accepted membership on the Commission.

The conception of such a body was supported from the start by the Christian Council of Asia. The inaugural meeting followed a three day symposium on Asian Human Rights that was sponsored by Centre for Christian Response to Asian Issues, affiliated with the NCC-J.

Among other things, the Commission will:

- Publicize and secure effective implementation of human rights law
- Monitor the regional human rights situation
- Receive and examine reports of human rights violations
- Make recommendations and take appropriate steps to secure relief and redress for victims of human rights violations

--Publish reports on the human rights situation, including where appropriate, the findings of the AHRC's investigations into specific human rights violations

--Develop safeguards for those working to promote human rights within Asia.

When asked whether the objectives of the Commission overlap with those of Amnesty International, Mr. Clement John of the Christian Council of Asia's International Affairs Desk, and also Secretary General of the Commission, said that the new body had a different focus than AI.

"Amnesty International is restricted to cases of political prisoners, seeking the release of Prisoners of conscience and abolishing the death penalty. The AHRC focus will not be as specific. As well, Amnesty happens to be based in London. While there are Asians involved, I think that a person from Asia has somewhat more knowledge of the region."

Why was the inaugural meeting held in Japan? One reason may be that Japan is relatively free as compared to other Asian countries. As well, the Commission would thus be able to tap the many resources available in Japan. More important for Christians in Japan however, is the reason stated by Senator Diokno of the Philippines.

"The Japanese government is presently supporting repressive governments in Asia. Asian human rights activists are challenging the Japanese people to raise their voice against such support and against the violations of human rights in Asian countries. This is the most important message we want to convey to the people of conscience of Japan."

NCC-J -- NCC-K JOINT CONSULTATION

The 5th Consultation between the NCC-J and the National Council of Churches in Korea will be held in Tokyo January 27-30. It will be an opportunity to reflect on the past 100 years of mission in Korea, on the 40 years since the end of WWII, and on the 20 years since the signing of the Korea-Japan Treaty. Such reflection will be the basis from which to discuss future NCC-J -- NCC-K relations.

The International Affairs desk of the Christian Conference of Asia is planning to hold an Asia Heiwa (Peace) Conference in Naha City, Okinawa February 19 - 23, 1985.

The objective of the Conference, is, among other things, to draw an Asian Ecumenical Heiwa agenda for the churches in the region and to clarify an Asian perspective for peace. Approximately 100 participants, mainly from the Asian region and some from Europe, America and the Pacific will gather for this 5-day conference.

The issues to be taken up include nuclearization of the Asian region, the rise of militarism and its socio-economic and political effects, the conflicts and tension within Asian societies due to economic disparities, communalism, racism and sexism and the sense of peacelessness felt by the marginalized in Asian societies.

SHARING OF FEMINIST VIEWS

Women in the past have often been psychologically isolated from the patriarchal relations of dominance within the church. A small group of Japanese Christian women have been meeting to discuss their religious experience, theology and feminism. Together they seek an understanding of ministry and the church free from patriarchal definitions.

At the December meeting of the group, YAMAGUCHI Satoko, born in 1945, shared the following.

"When Japan was so poor materialistically after the devastation of the war, my mother took me along with her to hear the music at a Catholic Church. What I remember most are the beautiful stained glass windows.

(continued on p.8)

(Feminist Views continued)

Following my mother's wishes, I went to Joshi Gakuin Junior High School, and also to the Kyodan related church. During my last year in that school, I was baptized. Yet I could not stop asking myself if I had become a Christian simply to satisfy my own needs. I wrestled with this question for quite some time.

In 1966 I went to a seminar on theological studies led by Prof. SATAKE Akira. I was impressed by the methods of critical analysis of the Bible, and I thought that through such study, I would be able to come closer to an answer to some of my questions.

I began to realize that the core of Christianity had been covered by centuries of human--mostly male--interpretation. In order to pursue my questioning, I began study at the Japan Biblical Seminary.

Through my study I came to understand that women have come to believe that to be faithful is to be submissive. We are to be submissive to an interpretation of Christianity that is characterized by an all-male orientation. The church's understanding of male-female relationships was based completely on male-centred thinking. I wished to pursue with my female colleagues discussion of a stage of human relationship in which the male was not dominant.

I lived in the seminary dormitory at the time. The men's dormitory had a supervisor who also had caretaking responsibilities. In the women's dorm, we were expected to do all of the cleaning ourselves.

As far as the curriculum was concerned, it too was biased against the female students. The language classes for English, German and Greek were compulsory, while Latin and Hebrew were optional. The Hebrew course, however conflicted exactly with the time of the organ class. This organ class was compulsory for all female students.

When the women protested, the administration responded that it was practical for women to learn organ rather than Hebrew, which was too difficult for women. We felt that the choice ought to be left to the individual. Without ever having a chance to study Hebrew, it couldn't be said that it was "too difficult" for women.

Later the organ class became optional as well. That year the highest grade in the Hebrew course went to a woman. The next year as well, a woman stood at the top of the class. The professor of the course responded to this by saying that "Women are inferior in areas where creativity is required, so language may be suitable for them. All that is required in language study is a good memory."

I met my husband in seminary. After graduation he became a pastor in Hokkaido. I questioned the congregation's conception of me "belonging" to my husband. I told them that I was a member of the church, not simply "the pastor's wife."

Women have tried to fit the social expectation imposed on them to be dependent on men. Without economic independence, women's freedom is limited to the palm of their husband's hand.

Outside of the church I met women who are really concerned with equality for all. They are moving forward creatively to work towards a more just society. It is easier to communicate with them than with women within the church who are faithful to the male-oriented interpretation of Christianity.

The core of Christianity includes an understanding of the value of every individual, male and female. This is the only basis on which to build a true and lasting human partnership.